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Identical letters dated 23 June 1997 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and to the President of the Security Council

I attach a letter dated 21 June 1997 which I have received from the two Prime Ministers of the Royal Government of Cambodia in which they "ask for the assistance of the United Nations and the international community in bringing to justice those persons responsible for the genocide and crimes against humanity during the rule of the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979" (see annex).

The facts which gave rise to the request remain unclear. The Office of my Representative in Cambodia is presently seeking to clarify the situation, while the Secretariat is examining the legal and institutional issues involved. The letter is brought to your attention for any action which may be deemed appropriate.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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ANNEX

Letter dated 21 June 1997 from the First and Second Prime Ministers of Cambodia addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Government and people of Cambodia, we write to you to ask for the assistance of the United Nations and the international community in bringing to justice those persons responsible for the genocide and crimes against humanity during the rule of the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979.

In its resolution 1997/49 of April 1997 on Cambodia, the Commission on Human Rights requested:

> "the Secretary-General, through his Special Representative, in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, to examine any request by Cambodia for assistance in responding to past serious violations of Cambodian and international law as a means of bringing about national reconciliation, strengthening democracy and addressing the issue of individual accountability."

Cambodia does not have the resources or expertise to conduct this very important procedure. Thus, we believe it is necessary to ask for the assistance of the United Nations. We are aware of similar efforts to respond to the genocide and crimes against humanity in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and ask that similar assistance be given to Cambodia.

We believe that crimes of this magnitude are of concern to all persons in the world, as they greatly diminish respect for the most basic human right, the right to life. We hope that the United Nations and the international community can assist the Cambodian people in establishing the truth about this period and bringing those responsible to justice. Only in this way can this tragedy be brought to a full and final conclusion.

(Signed) Prince NORODOM Ranariddh
First Prime Minister

(Signed) HUN Sen
Second Prime Minister